

ty-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 7148 of November 17, 1998

Thanksgiving Day, 1998

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Thanksgiving Day is one of America's most beloved and widely celebrated holidays. Whether descendants of the original colonists or new citizens, Americans join with family and friends to give thanks to a provident God for the blessings of freedom, peace, and plenty.

We are a Nation of people who have come from many countries, cultures, and creeds. The colonial Thanksgiving at Plymouth in 1621, when the Pilgrims of the Old World mingled in fellowship and celebration with the American Indians of the New World, foreshadowed the challenge and opportunity that such diversity has always offered us: to live together in peace with respect and appreciation for our differences and to draw on one another's strengths in the work of building a great and unified Nation.

And so at Thanksgiving we must also remember to be thankful for the many contributions each generation of Americans has made to preserve our blessings. We are thankful for the brave patriots who have fought and died to defend our freedom and uphold our belief in human dignity. We are thankful for the men and women who have worked this land throughout the decades, from the stony farms of New England to the broad wheat fields of the Great Plains to the fertile vineyards of California, sharing our country's bounty with their fellow Americans and people around the world. We are thankful for the leaders and visionaries who have challenged us through the years to fulfill America's promise for all our people, to make real in our society our fundamental ideals of freedom, equality, and justice. We are thankful for the countless quiet heroes and heroines who work hard each day, raise their families with love and care, and still find time and energy to make their communities better places in which to live. Each of us has reason to be proud of our part in building America, and each of us has reason to be grateful to our fellow Americans for the success of these efforts.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim Thursday, November 26, 1998, as a National Day of Thanksgiving. I encourage all the people of the United States to assemble in their homes, places of worship, or community centers to share the spirit of goodwill and prayer; to express heartfelt thanks to God for the many blessings He has bestowed upon us; and to reach out in true gratitude and friendship to our brothers and sisters across this land who, together, comprise our great American family.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this seventeenth day of November, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and nine-

ty-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 7149 of November 19, 1998

National Great American Smokeout Day, 1998

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

One of the greatest public health threats facing Americans today is tobacco addiction and all the related health disorders that come with it. More Americans die every year from tobacco-related diseases than from AIDS, illegal drugs, alcohol, fires, car accidents, murders, and suicides combined. Although we have heard for decades the Surgeon General's warning that smoking kills, each day more than 3,000 young Americans become regular smokers—and more than 1,000 of them will die prematurely as a result.

This past April, the Surgeon General issued a new report on tobacco that underscores the urgent need for comprehensive legislation to reduce youth smoking. Over the past 6 years, youth smoking has grown by one-third, increasing by an alarming 80 percent among African American youth. Currently, more than 36 percent of high school students smoke, and recent statistics released by the Centers for Disease Control also reaffirm what we already know: nicotine creates an addiction that is extremely difficult to overcome. Unfortunately, 86 percent of our young people who smoke daily and try to quit are unsuccessful, and casual teenage smokers—even those who smoke as few as three cigarettes a month—often go on to become regular smokers.

My Administration has worked hard for comprehensive and effective tobacco legislation that will cut teen smoking. We will continue our efforts until the Congress has acted to pass such legislation. Our 1999 budget also includes an unprecedented increase in funding for research at the National Institutes of Health, and the National Cancer Institute plans to allocate millions of those dollars for research into prevention and cessation programs to reduce tobacco use.

Each year, the Great American Smokeout gives us the opportunity to do what we should do every day: raise awareness among all Americans—but especially among children and teens—of the dangers of smoking. Through such youth-related promotions as the Great American SmokeScream and the Great American Smokeout Pledge, we can encourage young people who smoke to stop, and we can convince those who don't smoke that they should never start. Adult smokers should also remember the power of personal example and make a sincere effort to stop smoking on this special day, taking an important step toward a better, healthier future.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim November 19, 1998, as National Great American Smokeout Day. I call upon all Americans to join together in an effort to educate our children about